Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

# Message Text

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O 181606Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2804
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 19298

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

CHEROKEE

FOR SECRETARY, ATHERTON AND SAUNDERS ONLY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PEPR EG IS US
SUBJECT: THOUGHTS ON CAMP DAVID STRATEGY

REF: (A) STATE 207516 (B) TEL AVIV 10589

1. TO MY MIND, OUR OBJECTIVE AT CAMP DAVID SHOULD BE OBTAINING ARRANGEMENTS, WHETHER THEY BE IN A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OR IN SOME OTHER FORM, THAT DO MORE THAN GET US THROUGH THIS ROUND OF TALKS. THEY SHOULD BE ROOTED IN THE REALITIES OF THE AREA SITUATION IF THEY ARE NOT TO BE BLOWN AWAY WITH THE FIRST POLITICAL GUSTS, WHICH CAMP DAVID WILL INEVITABLY GENERATE. BOTH SADAT AND BEGIN SHOULD BE URGED TO BE ASFLEXIBLE AS POSSIBLE, BUT FORM AS WELL AS SUBSTANCE SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED.

2. THIS SAID, AND WITH ALL RESPECT TO SAM, I THINK SOME OF THE IDEAS SUGGESTED REF B WOULD, IF ACCEPTED, COURT GRIEF AND IMPERMANENCE. THE SECRETARY MAY KNOW MORE FROM

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HIS PRIVATE TALK WITH SADAT THAN I DO ABOUT HOW FAR HE IS WILLING TO GO, BUT SADAT'S CREDIBILITY AT HOME AND IN THE ARAB WORLD WOULD BE SERIOUSLY IMPUGNED IF HE CAME HOME WITH THE TYPE OF ARRANGEMENTS SAM SUGGESTS. SADAT WOULD BE ACCUSED OF HAVING BOUGHT A PIG IN A POKE. HE WOULD IN EFFECT HAVE AGREED TO A SIGNIFICANT TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE IN THE WEST BANK AND TO GO AHEAD WITH CONCRETE

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SINAI ARRANGEMENTS IN RETURN FOR SOME VAGUE ISRAELI COMMITMENT THAT THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE WILL BE DECIDED AFTER FIVE YEARS--NO ONE KNOWS HOW--AND ACCEPTANCE OF BEGIN'S HOME RULE PLAN. IF BEGIN EVEN REFUSES TO BITE THE BULLET ON SOVEREIGNTY, AFTER SADAT HAS ACCEPTED OTHER POINTS, IT WILL BE COLD COMFORT FOR SADAT TO KNOW THAT THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER MAY THEREAFTER BE CRITICIZED AT HOME. SADAT'S CONCESSIONS, LIKE THOSE HE MADE EARLIER ON NORMALIZATION, WILL FROM THAT TIME ON BE POCKETED BY WHATEVER ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS IN OFFICE AND NEGOTIATIONS WILL IN EFFECT HAVE TO START FROM THERE. SADAT WILL LOOK FOOLISH TO HIS PEOPLE AND THE ARABS AND, WORSE STILL, THE US-SPONSORED PEACE PROCESS WILL BE DISCREDITED.

3. IN MY JUDGMENT, IF THERE IS TO BE ANY CHANCE OF SADAT'S BEING ABLE TO SELL TO HUSSEIN, THE PALESTINIANS AND THE SAUDIS (AS WELL AS TO HIS OWN MILITARY AND PUBLIC) WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS EMERGE FROM CAMP DAVID, CAREFUL PACKAGING WILL BE REQUIRED. ANY WEST BANK TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE THAT MAY EMERGE SHOULD BE STRICTLY CAST IN THE CONTEXT OF "MINOR", A TERM WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN CAREFULLY DEFINED AND SHOULD THEREFORE LEND ITSELF TO SOME REASONABLE ELASTICITY IN INTERPRETATION, PRO-VIDED THIS IS NOT TOO BLATANT. IF THE ISRAELIS OPENLY CALL SUCH A CONCEPT TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE, SADAT WILL





HAVE TROUBLE SELLING WHAT HE HAS ACCEPTED. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF "MINOR" RECTIFICATIONS, THE PERES PROPOSED (BUT SUBSEQUENTLY DROPPED) LANGUAGE AT VIENNA COULD BE CONSIDERED, NAMELY "THERE WILL BE CHANGES IN THE BORDERS BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND ISRAEL WHICH SATISFY THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PALESTINIANS AND SATISFY THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL". SADAT HAS ACCEPTED THIS. AND ALL OF THIS SHOULD BE WRAPPED IN A RESOUNDING RE-AFFIRMATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INADMISSABILITY OF THE ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY WAR. I KNOW THAT THIS WILL BE HARD FOR BEGIN TO SWALLOW, BUT WE MAY BE ASKING SADAT TO SWALLOW EVEN MORE BITTER MEDICINE.

4. AS FAR AS THE ISRAELI SECURITY PRESENCE ON THE WEST BANK IS CONCERNED, DEMILITARIZATION OUGHT TO BE THE OBJECTIVE, BUT IT IS A WORD THAT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO SELL. THE CONCEPT, ON THE OTHER HAND, SHOULD BE SALEABLE TO SADAT, DEPENDING UPON HOW IT IS PUT. AT THIS STAGE, WE MAY BE WELL ADVISED TO LIMIT ANY PUBLIC DECLARATION TO SOMETHING GENERAL, I.E., "ADEQUATE SECURITY ARRANGE-MENTS WILL BE WORKED OUT".

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5. I FRANKLY AM AT A TOTAL LOSS AS TO HOW SADAT CAN CONCLUDE A FULL PEACE TREATY OR SOMETHING LESS ON THE WEST BANK BY HIMSELF. IT WOULD BE NICE IF HE COULD, AS HE SOMETIMES SAYS HE WILL, BUT HE CANNOT DO SO AND HOPE TO MAKE IT STICK. NOTHING THAT HE NEGOTIATES IN THE WEST BANK GIVES ANY FORM OF LEGITIMACY TO THE IN-TERIM REGIME. AS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY STATED, IT WILL BE BUILDING ON QUICKSAND AND WILL NOT ENDURE.

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6. THERE IS MUCH IN THE BEGIN PLAN THAT MAKES GOOD SENSE WERE ITS AUTHORSHIP NOT SO SUSPECT IN ARAB EYES. BUT ENDING THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION AND SETTING UP SELF-GOVERNMENT, IF IT IS TO BE ACCEPTABLE IN THE ARAB WORLD AT LARGE, SHOULD BE WITH THE CONSENT OF ALL OF THE PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE SELF-RULE DELEGATED BY THE ISRAELI MILITARY GOVERNMENT. THAT'S AN IMPORTANT POINT.

7. ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES, THOUGH NOW TEMPORARILY STOPPED, WILL HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED. KNOWING OUR POSI-TION, THE ISRAELIS HAVE REGULARLY SOUGHT TO PULL THE WOOL OVER OUR EYES UNTIL CAUGHT FLAGRANTE DELICTO, SO THAT ADMISSION WAS INESCAPABLE. THE ISRAELIS, FOR REASONS WHICH FROM THEIR POINT MAY BE UNDERSTANDABLE, WANT TO CHANGE THE DEMOGRAPHIC PICTURE IN THE WEST BANK. DESPITE DAYAN'S TALK ABOUT ONLY INDIVIDUALS BEING ALLOWED

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TO PURCHASE LAND, I SUSPECT THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO CREATE FACTS ON THE GROUND THAT WILL AFFECT WHAT HAPPENS IN FIVE YEARS. GIVEN THIS SITUATION,
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THE ILLEGALITY OF LARGE SCALE ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN THE WEST BANK SHOULD BE REAFFIRMED IF SADAT IS TO SELL SOME UNPALATABLE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS TO CONFRERES.

8. SINCE THE CAMP DAVID MEETING MAY BRING US TO THE CRUNCH, I HAVE ONE OTHER GENERAL OBSERVATION TO MAKE WITH WHICH SAM MAY OR MAY NOT AGREE. DESPITE HIS SENSE OF U.S. PRESSURE, MR. BEGIN STRIKES ME AS BEING IN AN ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION. IF SADAT DOES NOT AGREE TO HIS TERRITORIAL DEMANDS, THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT CAN BE DEPICTED AS BEING AT FAULT; IF SADAT AGREES TO THOSE TERRITORIAL DEMANDS, THAT'S ALL THE BETTER; IF SADAT SUBSEQUENTLY GOES UNDER BECAUSE OF SUCH AGREEMENT, WELL--THAT'S JUST TOO BAD BECAUSE MR. BEGIN KNEW ALL ALONG THE UNRELIABILITY OF THE ARABS AND, ANYWAY, IT REMOVES THE ONE ARAB LEADER WHO SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGED ISRAEL'S LONGTIME SOLE CLAIM ON THE AFFECTIONS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE; AND IF IT FAILS BECAUSE OF BEGIN'S OWN UNWILLINGNESS TO GO THE EXTRA MILE, THIS CAN BE EXPLAINED AWAY AT HOME AND ANY OPPOSITION CRITICISM WILL BE MANAGEABLE FOR AS ADROIT A POLITICAL LEADER AS MR. BEGIN. SADAT HAS NO SUCH ADVANTAGE. HE MUST COME OUT WITH SOMETHING SALEABLE OR HE IS IN TROUBLE, HIS ALREADY FALTERING PEACE ININIATIVE WILL BE IRREVOCABLY DAMAGED, AND THE VALIDITY OF HIS RELIANCE ON THE UNITED STATES WILL BE PERCEIVED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE AND THE ARABS AS HAVING BEEN MISPLACED.

9. THE ABOVE ARE GENERAL THOUGHTS BASED ON REFTELS. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BE SPECIFIC IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME MORE PRECISE INDICATION OF WHAT OUR OBJECTIVES WILL BE AT CAMP DAVID. AS REQUESTED ELSEWHERE, I AM PREPARING A SERIES OF MESSAGES ON THE POLITICAL/ECONOMIC DYNAMICS OF EGYPT WHICH I HOPE TO SUBMIT NEXT WEEK AND WHICH WILL
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SPELL OUT IN GREATER LENGTH THE CONSTRAINTS UNDER WHICH EVEN THE NORMALLY VENTURESOME SADAT WILL HAVE TO WORK.
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